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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 7446

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, EC
SUBJ: ELECTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: CONVERSATION BETWEEN
ECUADORIAN PRESIDENT POVEDA AND ASST SECY VAKY

REF: BOGOTA 7427

1. ASST SECY VAKY MET YESTERDAY (AUG 8) WITH PRESIDENT OF ECUADORIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT ADM POVEDA AT PRESIDENTIAL SUITE IN BOGOTA HILTON. ALSO PRESENT WERE ECUADORIAN FOREIGN MINISTER AYALA AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR EMB BOGOTA.

2. VAKY OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY DELIVERING THE ORIGINAL OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER TO ADM POVEDA. HE STATED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD WANTED TO EXPRESS HIS ADMIRATION FOR THE EXAMPLE OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY GIVEN THE WORLD BY ECUADOR. INDEED THERE WAS WIDESPREAD INTEREST IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE IN THE RETURN OF ECUADOR TO DEMOCRATIC RULE. AS A FRIEND OF ECUADOR, THE U.S. HAD BEEN CONCERNED BY REPORTS THAT SOME WANTED TO DENY ROLDOS THE VICTORY HE HAD WON, USING THE PRETEXT OF ALLEGATIONS OF IRREGULARITIES IN THE FIRST ROUND OF ELECTIONS TO DO SO.

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3. POVEDA REPLIED THAT THE GOE HAD PUT FORWARD A PLAN FOR ELECTIONS, WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF RESTORING DEMOCCATIC GOVERNMENT; THAT THE ARMED FORCES HAD SUPPORTED THIS PLAN; AND THAT, EVEN THOUGH THE RESULTS DISPLEASED MANY, THEY WOULD BE RESPECTED. IN ANY ELECTION, THERE HAD TO BE WINNERS AND LOSERS; THIS WAS INHERENT IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, AND IF THW INNER TURNED OUT TO BE SOMEONE THAT, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, INSPIRED A NEGATIVE

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REACTION ON THE PART OF A MINORITY, THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY HAD NEVERTHELESS TO BE ACCEPTED. THE ATMOSPHERE IN ECUADOR WAS MUCH CALMER NOW, AND IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO HOLD THE SECOND ROUND OF ELECTIONS IN ANOTHER 30-45 DAYS. THE GOE, FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT THE ELECTIONS PROCESS MUST CONTINUE, WOULD IGNORE THE VOICES OF THOSE WHO WANTED TO INTERRUPT IT. "DEMOCRATIC STABILITY" WAS THE ULTIMATE GOAL AND IT MUST BE PURSUED.

4. CONCEDING THAT ERRORS HAD BEEN COMMITTED DURING THE ELECTIONS, POVEDA ARGUED THAT IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN OTHERWISE, GIVEN THE FACT THAT MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE HAD NEVER VOTED BEFORE. HE DENIED THERE HAD BEEN FRAUD, HOWEVER, AND POINTED TO THE FACT THAT ROLDOS HAD WON AS EVIDENCE THAT THE GOE HAD NOT TRIED TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME. AYALA ADDED THAT THE GOE'S HUMAN RIGHT RECORD WAS ONE OF THE BEST IN THE HEMISPHERE.

5. VAKY EXPRESSED AGREEMENT WITH POVEDA'S OBSERVATION THAT BY ITS VERY NATURE, DEMOCRACY ENTAILED CERTAIN RISKS. THE U.S. CONSIDERED IT OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY BE ALLOWED TO PREVAIL. RESPECT BY THE GOE FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE ECUADORIAN PEOPLE WOULD FACILITATE THE CONTINUATION OF CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE USG AND GOE.
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